

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

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### WATERFOWL HUNTING REGULATION FRAMEWORKS ARE ANNOUNCED; SEASONS TO BE CLOSED FOR CANVASBACK DUCKS

Hunting seasons this autumn will be closed for canvasback ducks everywhere in the United States and also closed on redheads except in the Pacific flyway, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton announced today. Other waterfowl hunting regulation frameworks will be about the same as last year.

"Canvasbacks and redheads are not in danger of extinction," Secretary Morton said, "but they certainly are in trouble, and stern measures are needed to help rebuild their populations. I have followed the advice of waterfowl experts and concur with their recommendation that if we err, we should err on the side of sound conservation."

Despite reduced hunting bags permitted for these species in recent seasons, the numbers of canvasbacks and redheads have declined even though other duck species have increased following the drought conditions of the late 1950's and early 1960's.

"Canvasbacks long have been considered one of the premier waterfowl of the continent," Secretary Morton said. "Generations of hunters have been delighted with this fine game bird, and it has been held in the highest esteem by all familiar with our waterfowl resources."

Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service has launched an expanded research program on canvasbacks and has allotted \$200,000 for this purpose. The possibility will be explored that declining habitat quality in certain key areas may be affecting the status of this important species. The possible effects of disease, pesticides, and other pollutants also will be studied.

Hunters can anticipate a good year for other species. Special restrictions exist in some flyways, however, for wood ducks, mallards and black ducks.

Most species of ducks generally are expected to be moving down the flyways in about the same numbers as in 1971. Habitat on the favored prairie pothole nesting country of Canada and the northern United States generally is in good condition, aerial surveys conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service indicated. Conditions are not as ideal as in the past three years, however.

Nathaniel P. Reed, Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, noted that the Department is concerned over the dry summer which Canada's "duck factory" has been experiencing. He said that U.S. and Canadian wildlife biologists are monitoring weather conditions closely. "We all are hoping for a winter with plenty of snowfall to help the habitat," he said.

Despite favorable situations for most goose populations, the season is closed for Atlantic brant, which experienced poor production the last two years because of exceptionally late cold spring weather in the Arctic, where this bird breeds.

Framework regulations, within which States select their hunting seasons, are established by the Fish and Wildlife Service after recommendations are made by State wildlife agencies, flyway councils, and major private conservation organizations.

Copies of the Service's regulatory announcements, which appear in the Federal Register, may be obtained from its regional offices in Albuquerque, Atlanta, Boston, Denver, Minneapolis and Portland, or from State fish and game agencies.